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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSÉ (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 93: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/49/18, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/403, 404, 464, 499)

AGENDA ITEM 94: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/49/271, A/49/287-S/1994/894, A/49/312, 331, 362, 381, 402)

1. Ms. DE MIRANDA (Suriname) said that, as a multi-ethnic society, her country strongly supported all efforts to eradicate racism and racial discrimination and believed that the United Nations should continue to give programmes in that field the highest priority. The abhorrent apartheid regime in South Africa had been abolished, but the assistance of the international community would be required for that country to overcome apartheid's legacy of social and economic disparity.

2. Yet racism remained deeply rooted throughout the world. Racism, for example, was at the origin of the atrocities committed in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. It was necessary to bring the perpetrators of those crimes to justice in order to set an example. Thus her country welcomed the Security Council's establishment of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991, as well as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's recommendation for the establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute the perpetrators of crimes against humanity.

3. Education was important, too. In recent years, flows of refugees and migrant workers had given rise in the industrialized countries to xenophobia and intolerance which legislation alone could not combat. Her country therefore applauded the European Union's decision to elaborate an overall strategy to combat racial and xenophobic acts of violence, which she hoped would help to sensitize the public to the integration of ethnic minorities.

4. Because the consecutive decades to combat racism and racial discrimination were one of the United Nations instruments in that field, it was a matter of concern to her delegation that the Trust Fund for the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had thus far received only $10 million.

5. Speaking on agenda item 94, she said that, in the light of the importance of the free exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination for the achievement of peace in the Middle East, it was vital for the international community to make every effort to ensure that the momentum created by the recent accords in that region was not lost.

6. Mrs. SHARMA (Nepal) said that the United Nations and the international community had been instrumental in bringing about the demise of apartheid in South Africa, but had been powerless to stop the killings in Rwanda, Somalia,

Liberia, Angola, Mozambique and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her delegation welcomed the willingness of the new Government of Rwanda to prosecute all perpetrators of genocide in that country by means of an international tribunal, and also urged the United Nations to move quickly to bring the criminals in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina to justice.

7. As a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, her country had introduced many laws and regulations to protect its ethnic minorities and promote the interests of refugees, women and economically marginalized groups. It was engaged in preparing a national action plan on all aspects of human rights based on the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights.

8. Racial discrimination impeded social progress and created social tension the world over; many racist acts, including attacks on migrant workers, refugees and religious minorities had been committed in 1994. Her country commended the efforts of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and the Council of Europe in devising programmes to fight racism and other forms of intolerance. It also appreciated the work accomplished in 1994 by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, including in particular its decision to implement an early warning system to help avert racial discrimination and ethnic conflicts.

9. Turning to the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, she said that, for it to be successful, it should be adequately financed and appropriately utilized; proper evaluation of the activities of the past two Decades was important. It was also necessary for the many Member States that had not acceded to the Convention to do so. It should be borne in mind that, in poverty-stricken areas, competition to meet basic human needs contributed to racial discrimination.

10. Because of the importance of education in promoting humane values, her delegation noted with interest the Secretary-General's recommendations to international non-governmental organizations regarding educational measures. However, care should be taken to select organizations that, unlike many, based their programmes on the actual needs of the people and could involve other, local organizations. She emphasized that special care should be taken to ensure that information gathered on racial discrimination and human rights violations was accurate; that no race should be allowed to become a victim of reverse discrimination; and that programmes to eliminate racial discrimination should be carried out as an integral part of social development. Finally, for any United Nations decisions or programmes to be effective, it was necessary to invest the Organization with authority.

11. Mr. SIGURJÓNSSON (Iceland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland - said that racial prejudice was now taking the form of xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination in countries such as theirs where it was not institutionalized, and some parts of the world had seen instances of "ethnic cleansing". It was therefore necessary for Governments to take a determined approach in dealing with racism.

12. The Nordic countries welcomed the Security Council's establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Equivalent action should be taken with respect to Rwanda. It was time to move forward with implementing the relevant Security Council decisions if the international community was to demonstrate that gross violations of international humanitarian law and human rights could not be committed with impunity. In that connection, he noted that respect for human rights was a decisive factor in preventing cultural, ethnic and territorial disputes and thus a key element in the notion of extended security.

13. The Nordic countries had always endeavoured to work constructively with the various mechanisms established by the United Nations to deal with racism and related intolerance, and had great hopes for the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. They looked forward to seeing the efforts of those bodies and a great number of non-governmental organizations reflected in substantive national action in accordance with the Programme of Action for the Third Decade, which should be used to deal more effectively with discrimination against vulnerable groups, particularly ethnic minorities, refugees and migrant workers.

14. At the regional level, the Nordic countries had been debating the subject of racism within such forums as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Council of Europe, and had been particularly pleased by the Council of Europe's adoption of a comprehensive plan of action in that field. That plan of action had been followed up by the Nordic countries, and the subject would figure prominently on the agenda of the Nordic Council in 1995.

15. To be credible and effective, any international, regional, national or local policy for combating racial discrimination must include advisory services and education. The activities of the Centre for Human Rights were therefore of particular importance, and maximum use should be made of the opportunities offered by the proposed decade for human rights education and the 1995 United Nations Year for Tolerance.

16. Respect for human rights left no room for racism in theory or in practice. It was therefore imperative for the United Nations to build on the outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights and for its Member States to implement the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

17. Ms. FENG Cui (China) said that, although apartheid had been eliminated in South Africa, new forms of racism were spreading in some developed countries. Elimination of those scourges should therefore continue to be an important item on the agenda of the General Assembly. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and related intolerance would need appropriate conditions to carry out his mandate. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, apart from continuing to review reports submitted by States parties, should also put forward ideas and recommendations, and the Secretary-General should make the financial arrangements necessary to ensure its successful functioning.

18. With respect to South Africa, the United Nations and its specialized agencies should act promptly to compile documents and textbooks on the evil history of apartheid and the struggle to abolish it. It was also important to assist the South African people in their efforts to rebuild their country. With regard to the Programme of Action for the Third Decade, support should be given to the revised recommendations submitted by the African countries in the light of the changed situation, and adequate resources should be allocated in order to avoid a recurrence of the problems of the Second Decade.

19. Turning to item 94, she said that her country welcomed the historic breakthroughs in the Middle East peace process and hoped that the parties concerned would continue to take a flexible approach so that the Palestinian people would be able to exercise their right to self-determination soon. However, she stressed that the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination should not be misinterpreted to include actions that might infringe on the territorial integrity, national unity and ethnic harmony of an independent State.

20. Mr. OLEA (Mexico) said that the triumph of reason and civilization in South Africa was a victory for everyone, including the United Nations. The international community should continue to work for progress in that country by supporting its people and Government in their efforts to rebuild and to consolidate their achievements.

21. The international community must not tolerate the rise of new forms of racial discrimination. His country was particularly concerned at the plight of the millions of migrant workers who were increasingly victims of xenophobia. In some cases, racial hatred and violence were even being encouraged for political purposes. It was important for Governments to take steps to promote greater tolerance between migrant workers and the rest of society. An active policy of denouncing and punishing xenophobic acts would contribute significantly to that goal. His country supported the Secretary-General's recommendation to States, in his proposal for supplementing the Programme of Action for the Third Decade (A/49/464), to adopt emergency measures to end acts of racial discrimination against migrant workers and refugees.

22. His delegation welcomed the Commission on Human Rights' decision to appoint a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism. The Special Rapporteur's report to the Commission contained valuable information on how he intended to carry out his mandate. However, it would be useful for the Committee to have access to a preliminary version of his second report, and he hoped that that report and other pertinent documents would be made available soon.

23. He urged all countries that had not yet acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to do so, and also to sign, ratify or accede to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, so that it could enter into force. His delegation supported the activities for the Third Decade, which should be adequately financed and should focus on spreading a culture of solidarity and tolerance.

24. Mrs. AITEZAZ (Pakistan) said that her country had consistently supported the struggle of the people of South Africa against racism and hoped that the international community would provide assistance to that country to eliminate the socio-economic disparities that had resulted from apartheid. Unfortunately, there were new manifestations of racial conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Caucasus region and elsewhere. The blatant Serbian acts of aggression and genocide against the defenceless people of Bosnia and Herzegovina were despicable crimes. If the international community failed to respond to the racial and religious genocide, whether in that country or in Rwanda, Kashmir or Azerbaijan, it might be confronted with widespread conflicts between races, nations and beliefs throughout the world.

25. The time had come for the United Nations to implement specific policies to promote equality among all human beings and enable them to realize their inherent potential. Discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnic origin, sex, language and religion persisted in many parts of the world. The growing phenomenon of xenophobia was a matter for deep concern. The rights of migrant workers, immigrants, refugees and minorities were being violated in many areas in spite of the impressive range of international instruments adopted to combat discrimination.

26. Her country was particularly concerned at the plight of Muslim minorities in a number of countries, where they were subjected to various forms of discrimination and often to racist and Fascist violence. It was regrettable that certain parties seemed bent on equating Islam with terrorism. The campaign against Islam was designed to justify the continued suppression of Muslim peoples. Moreover, discrimination based on the caste system had yet to be addressed. People belonging to the lowest caste, which constituted a majority, were segregated in political, economic, social and cultural spheres.

27. The Programme of Action for the Third Decade must be fully implemented. Greater resources should be allocated in all countries to address racial tension and conflict. Stronger action must be taken against new manifestations of racism directed against migrant workers, refugees and minorities.

28. Her Government had consistently extended moral and material assistance to all peoples struggling against racial discrimination. Pakistan was one of the first States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and would continue to work for the elimination of racism throughout the world. Lastly, her delegation stressed the need to support the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and urged the States parties concerned to pay their arrears in order to enable the Committee to continue to serve as the vanguard of the campaign to eradicate all forms of racism.

29. Mr. RUBINSTEIN (Israel) noted with satisfaction that a large majority of Member States had acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which was essential in international efforts to eliminate racism. Israel welcomed Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/64, which rightly included anti-Semitism among other forms of racism to be

examined by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism. His country was cooperating closely with the Special Rapporteur in order to facilitate his work.

30. The resurgence of racism and anti-Semitism showed that extremist groups still constituted a problem threatening the world at large. Israel's fight against racism was not limited to combating anti-Semitism. The Jewish people had a deeply-rooted tradition of struggling against the many manifestations of racism and xenophobia. Israel had taken steps to combat racism directed against minority populations by extremist groups, and its education system devoted much attention and resources to teaching tolerance and educating young people about the dangers of racism. Political parties whose platforms espoused racist doctrines were forbidden from running in elections to Israel's Parliament and, during the past year, the Government had outlawed two extremist organizations dedicated to inciting racist violence. Governments and national institutions had a responsibility to ensure that individual States combated racial discrimination. Israel was committed to continued cooperation in that regard.

31. Mr. RATA (New Zealand) said that his country was committed to fighting racism wherever it occurred. While not claiming that New Zealand was entirely free of racial discrimination, his Government had the strong political will to ensure that equality and non-discrimination were a reality in the country. His delegation welcomed the remarkable victory in the struggle against racism in South Africa and was proud to have contributed to the United Nations and Commonwealth action in support of South Africa's transition.

32. Repression in other parts of the world, however, could not be ignored. In the territory of the former Yugoslavia, atrocities continued to occur, motivated by ethnic paranoia and the determination of some to eliminate those of a different ethnic background. There was compelling evidence that the purported authorities in the districts where "ethnic cleansing" was occurring were using it as an instrument of long-term policy. The international community had been greatly shocked by the genocidal massacres that had taken place in Rwanda. New Zealand had supported the establishment of a commission of experts to investigate grave breaches of international humanitarian law in Rwanda and would welcome efforts to establish an international tribunal to prosecute those responsible.

33. His Government welcomed the appointment by the Commission on Human Rights of a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism. In order to ensure efficiency, close coordination was necessary between the Special Rapporteur and all the relevant United Nations mechanisms. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination played a central role in monitoring actions by States parties to fulfil their obligations under the International Convention. New Zealand had been pleased to support the decision by States parties to amend the Convention in order to place the Committee on a more secure financial footing. It had already ratified the relevant amendments and urged other States parties to do likewise.

34. His delegation welcomed the adoption of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade and stressed that States should give particular attention to women who belong to ethnic or racial minorities and were victims of double discrimination based on gender and ethnic or racial identity. The Programme should also urge States to give similar attention to the situation of indigenous women.

35. Ms. VILFAN (Slovenia) said that her country wholeheartedly welcomed the dismantling of apartheid and hoped that the South Africans would be able to bring about a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society. Yet, racism, intolerance and inter-ethnic violence continued in many parts of the world. As a result of social changes, such manifestations had occurred in several European countries. Vigorous action at the regional level was necessary. In that connection, the States members of the Council of Europe, including Slovenia, had adopted in 1993 a Declaration and a plan of action to combat those phenomena. Complementary measures had been taken by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

36. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development should endorse policies to prevent situations leading to racial discrimination, especially against women and girls. The High Commissioner for Human Rights could play an important role in averting such situations, but it was important to provide him with the necessary resources.

37. The elimination of discrimination was impossible without universal accession to the relevant international human rights instruments. Slovenia attached importance to the monitoring of compliance by States parties with their obligations under those instruments. Her country was in favour of the new arrangements for financing the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination through the regular budget, and called on all States parties to support the amendment to the International Convention.

38. The human rights treaty regime should continue to apply to the successor States of federations that had been dissolved. All successor States were equal and should notify their succession to the bodies monitoring implementation of the international treaties to which the predecessor State had been a party. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) should therefore give notification of its succession as a party to the various relevant human rights treaties. Slovenia strongly supported the Programme of Action for the Third Decade and appreciated the supplementary proposals submitted by the Secretary-General.

39. Turning to item 94, she said her country fully recognized the right to self-determination as a basic human right and fundamental principle of international law. The exercise of that right was an ongoing process and models of political organization or economic, social and cultural development could be changed by the people concerned. Her delegation was fully aware of the complexity of the issues involved and the need to explore the most relevant approaches to the effective realization of that right. Implementing the right to self-determination through autonomy was one such approach. Another was the

holding of genuine democratic elections periodically with, where necessary, international monitoring. That was particularly relevant to some of the situations under consideration and should be taken into account in the relevant political processes.

40. Mr. SOEGARDA (Indonesia) said that the elimination of racism and racial discrimination was of the utmost importance to achieving social peace and stability. The situation in the former Yugoslavia and, until recently, in South Africa starkly exemplified the divisive effect of racism, which was inconsistent with the ethics and values essential for peaceful relationships between peoples and between nations.

41. His country supported the Programme of Action for the Third Decade. Indonesia would support the efforts of the democratically elected South African Government to achieve an equitable path of development for all its people, and the international community, through the Programme of Action, should do likewise. Racism, in varying degrees, was still a world-wide phenomenon. The success of the Decade was therefore a cause which should unite all countries.

42. The Programme of Action recognized that the biggest contribution to the elimination of racial discrimination would result from action taken by States within their own borders and that international action should be directed to supporting those activities. He stressed the need of the developing countries for technical and financial assistance to pursue such action.

43. The regional workshops and seminars envisaged in the Programme of Action were of particular interest to his country, since they would provide an opportunity to study the experience of other countries in combating racism and also the economic factors that helped to perpetuate that phenomenon.

44. Efforts to address those issues should be incorporated into other activities of the United Nations system. The convening of an inter-agency meeting indicated that there would be system-wide cooperation in implementing the Programme of Action, in keeping with the decisions of the Vienna Conference on Human Rights and the Commission on Human Rights.

45. However, the Secretary-General must be provided with the appropriate financial resources for effective action. Lack of adequate resources has been one reason why the programmes of action of the past two decades had not been fully implemented; that was why the more conservative Programme of Action for the Third Decade had been restricted to activities that were suggested as being essential.

46. In conclusion, he emphasized the importance not only of raising the level of public awareness of the principles of equality and tolerance but also of injecting into the various United Nations activities a determination to combat racism and racial discrimination, which were violations of human rights and needed to be addressed as such. Ultimately, however, it was within individual societies that such phenomena would be best confronted and overcome.

47. Mr. VARŠO (Slovakia) said that his country unreservedly supported the United Nations in its efforts to combat racism. Failure to face that scourge was a destabilizing element in society. Slovakia was firmly committed to the principle enshrined in the Charter concerning the promotion of human rights for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

48. In his country, a multi-ethnic State, there was a consensus on that matter, both in Parliament and among the population at large. The elimination of racial discrimination was a principle enshrined in the Constitution and laws of the country, and Slovakia had succeeded to international treaties on the subject, in particular the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the provisions of which took precedence over domestic law.

49. Slovakia had recently recognized the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination under article 14 of the International Convention. It had also agreed to co-sponsor with Belgium the draft resolution on the status of the Convention.

50. The elimination of discrimination against persons on grounds of ethnic origin, religion or language was pursued in Slovakia through a twofold approach: prevention, largely through education and raising public awareness and, where that failed, through sanctions provided by the Penal Code, although so far there had been no occasion to invoke the penalties for such offences.

51. As to the right to self-determination, that right was a fundamental principle of international law whereby society elected its political representatives to conduct public affairs, both internally and externally. The people of his country had enjoyed that right for some two years, ever since the peaceful division of the former Czechoslovakia into two sovereign States.

52. The right to self-determination was closely connected with the rights of national minorities, a matter that was of great concern to Slovakia as a multi-ethnic society. In dealing with potential problems it was very important both to preserve the territorial integrity of the multi-ethnic State and to ensure that human rights were respected for all. It was also necessary to adopt appropriate universal rules, based on a multilateral treaty, to be applied to persons belonging to national minorities throughout the world.

53. It was particularly important to emphasize that those principles were applied by Slovakia, especially in view of certain criticism to the effect that his country did not have the will or the means to deal with the problem of national minorities.

54. In conclusion he said that Slovakia was participating in the work of the Council of Europe in the preparation of a framework document on national minorities and that it supported multilateral activities in that field, including those undertaken within the United Nations system.

55. Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil) said that recent events in South Africa had brought new hope to the international community and seemed to give grounds for a more optimistic view of the prospects for racial harmony in the world. However, the recent resurgence of racist feelings and behaviour in other regions of the world remained a cause for major concern. That tendency had been observed even in some countries which had traditionally had a good record on human rights. The most disturbing manifestation had been the infamous "ethnic cleansing" which continued to be applied in northern Bosnia. It was high time that all Governments faced the problem and took vigorous measures to eliminate racism.

56. Brazil was a genuinely multiracial society. It was deeply committed to the principle of equality of all irrespective of race. Racism was a crime under the Constitution and a new law punished acts motivated by prejudice on grounds of race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin.

57. At the local level, the state of São Paolo had taken the initiative of creating a specialized police precinct to combat racist crimes and was implementing a programme of education for citizenship centred on problems of discrimination. Human rights had also been introduced as a subject on the curricula of civil and military police academies and a specific discipline for the discussion of racism had been introduced in schools.

58. As indicated in the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, the elimination of all forms of racism and related intolerance was a priority task for the international community, and Governments were called on to take measures to combat racism. The Programme of Action for the Third Decade provided a general framework for such action.

59. Brazil had co-sponsored the Commission on Human Rights resolution which had established a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism. The fulfilment of the Special Rapporteur's mandate depended on the active support of all Governments and relevant non-governmental organizations, yet certain Governments, including those of some countries which had traditionally given a lead in human rights initiatives, had refused to receive the Special Rapporteur.

60. At its most recent session, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had considered the idea of convening an international conference to examine such phenomena. Such a conference deserved the fullest consideration by Member States.

61. Turning to item 94, he said that the right to self-determination, as one of the guiding principles of the Charter, was essential for international peace and justice, and its importance had been reaffirmed by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Brazil considered that denial of the right to self-determination amounted to a violation of human rights.

62. In the modern world, however, self-determination was not a clear-cut issue. A particularly difficult situation arose where ethnic conflicts involved minorities and where the right to self-determination was invoked to justify or encourage separatist movements claiming political independence solely on an

ethnic basis. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had given expression to the principle that the right to self-determination could not authorize any action that would impair the territorial integrity or political unity of a sovereign State, whose Government represented the whole population without distinction of any kind.

63. Two complementary dimensions of that issue should be taken into account: at the international level, the defence of sovereignty and, domestically, the respect for democratic principles and the rights of minorities. In the view of Brazil, the best protection against the dangers of separatism lay in a truly democratic and representative political system open to participation by all citizens, including those belonging to minorities.

64. Mr. RAI (Papua New Guinea) commended South Africa for its successful elimination of racial discrimination and its resumption of its seat in the General Assembly. He observed, however, that in every continent of the world, discrimination based on racism, regionalism, tribalism, religion and social stratification remained prevalent. Racism was to a large extent rooted both in the evolutionary process of mankind and in the recent centuries of colonialism, which institutionalized the perception of certain groups as being superior or inferior.

65. His country had consistently outlawed racial discrimination as a matter of national policy enshrined in the Constitution. His Government was ready to cooperate with any other Governments and peoples to identify more effective measures to eradicate discrimination.

66. With regard to item 94, he reaffirmed his Government's strong commitment to the right of peoples to self-determination as exemplified by its tireless efforts in the United Nations. In that context he reiterated his Government's continued efforts to secure self-determination for the people of New Caledonia and its support for the Matignon Accords. However, his Government believed that there was room for further improvements, particularly with regard to the protection and promotion of the legitimate traditional rights of the Kanak people.

67. In conclusion, he pledged his delegation's continued cooperation in advancing the right of peoples to self-determination.

68. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan), referring to the recent welcome changes in South Africa, said that the international community should none the less continue striving to combat the various forms of racism which were ominously manifest elsewhere and which his Government had always firmly opposed. He called on the Secretary-General to coordinate all programmes relevant to the Third Decade with a view to attaining its objectives. Financing was important, particularly since the failure of the past two Decades was partly attributable to lack of resources. His Government had been making contributions in that connection since 1986, and was also providing financial support to the new democratic South Africa.

69. Turning to item 94, he urged the renewal of efforts for the universal realization of self-determination, congratulated the Republic of Palau on its independence and heartily welcomed the historic Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area. Lastly, he hoped that the relevant draft resolutions on racial discrimination and self-determination respectively would be formulated in a way that responded to the new conditions which had resulted from the recent drastic changes in the world.

70. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, expressed surprise that the Algerian delegation at a previous meeting should have linked the current Middle East peace process with the question of Western Sahara, unconnected as that process was with the mandate of the Secretary-General to organize a referendum. That Algeria should express hopes of a breakthrough was also puzzling, since the Identification Commission had begun registering potential voters by August 1994. Moreover, the report of the Secretary-General on the question of Western Sahara (A/49/492) stated that "the observers of the parties and OAU were of the general view that the operation had been conducted with appropriate transparency and rigour".

71. The work of the United Nations, and in particular the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), was therefore to be commended. The referendum would have some impact on peace and stability in the region; she did not believe that the current instability there was attributable to the question of Western Sahara.

72. Mr. SAHRAOUI (Algeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegations's statement had been an expression of the hope that the breakthrough in the Middle East would be repeated in their region. That dynamic process, which had paved the way for progress in both the Middle East and elsewhere, was based on dialogue between the parties concerned and had made it possible to remove potential obstacles. Moreover, the fact that the Algerian ambassador, in a statement to the Fourth Committee, had commended the efforts of the Identification Commission demonstrated that his country was clearly taking the development of the situation into account. None the less, the Secretary-General's report on the work of the organization (A/49/1) had underlined "fundamental differences in the interpretation of the main provision of the plan for the settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara, with particular respect to the criteria for the eligibility to vote". He hoped, however, that the two parties could engage in direct talks that would help to eliminate all such problems.

73. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that delegates could draw their own conclusions by referring to the statement made on the subject by the Moroccan ambassador. As for direct talks, the position was clarified in paragraph 5 of the report of the Secretary-General on the question of Western Sahara (A/49/492). The overall process, however, was going well and should be encouraged by all delegations. Meanwhile, she hoped that Algeria would display more optimism about the future.

74. Mr. SAHRAOUI (Algeria), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that while he commended the progress made concerning the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, problems clearly remained, as document A/49/1 indicated. Those problems therefore had to be taken into consideration.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.